

Today's topic

The Jonestown drugstore

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (AP) — The Peoples Temple commune at Jonestown was stocked with thousands of doses of dangerous drugs, smuggled into Guyana. Two Jonestown survivors said at least some of the drugs were used to brainwash or control would-be defectors.

A list of the drug inventory found in Jonestown, obtained by The Associated Press and the San Francisco Examiner, shows large supplies of depressants and downers. Survivors and law enforcement officials here said at least some of these were used to control the behavior of persons viewed as dangerous by the Rev. Jim Jones.

Included in the drug warehouse were Quaaludes, Demerol, Valium, morphine and 11,000 doses of a drug, Thorazine, used to calm manic depressives and others with extreme mental problems.

Checks with medical officials and medical journals produced a profile of a drug supply that promotes suicidal tendencies, can cause hallucinations, blurred vision, confusion, speech disturbances, involuntary movements, and emotional highs and lows.

Because there are no records, it is impossible to say how frequently or extensively the drugs were used.

Various visitors to Jonestown have reported indications that these drugs were used liberally — perhaps forcefully on children and others — in the hours-long ritual in which more than 900

persons went to their deaths from drinking a cyanide-laced punch.

The drug inventory, partial because the work of compiling it has not been completed, was made by brand name. It showed that the majority of the drugs were manufactured by U.S. firms. They were smuggled into Guyana by the Peoples Temple to avert this country's strict importation regulations on pharmaceuticals, officials said.

During a joint investigation by The AP and the Examiner into how drugs got into Jonestown, drug industry officials in Guyana said only minute amounts came through official channels here. Drugs bought for use in Guyana must be registered with and cleared through a government agency, and none of the drugs found in Jonestown were, these officials said.

Checks with some of the U.S. firms that manufactured the drugs found at Jonestown brought denials of any involvement. Many said they have policies against that kind of foreign sale.

Dr. Joyce H. Lowinson, a psychiatrist and member of President Carter's Strategy Council on Drug Abuse Prevention, said the list indicated "there were a lot of psychotic patients, or they (Peoples Temple) were using them to control people."

Dale Parks, a nursing supervisor at Jonestown who is a trained therapist for respiratory ailments, said he knew some of the drugs were used to control

would-be defectors in the commune's "extended care unit." But he professed shock at the extent, saying, "Oh my God, I don't believe it."

Parks fled Jonestown on Nov. 18 with Rep. Leo Ryan, a California Democrat. A short time later, Ryan, three American newsmen and Parks' mother were slain at a remote airstrip.

"Those are absolutely hard line, hard core drugs," Parks said when read a partial inventory from Jonestown.

"There's no way that many people were receiving treatment," he said in reference to the amount of drugs found in Jonestown. "I know they were using things to keep people under control, but not like this."

According to Parks, the control sessions took place in the extended care unit, eight beds separate from the regular medical facilities.

"If a person wanted to leave Jonestown or if there was a breach of rules, one was taken to the extended care unit," he said. "It was a rehabilitation place, where one would be reintegrated back into the community. The people were given drugs to keep them under control."



Jonestown drugs

Various drugs were scattered along a table in Jonestown, Guyana following the mass suicide-murders involving the members of the Peoples Temple cult. A list of the drug inventory found in Jonestown obtained by The Associated Press and the San Francisco Examiner, shows the commune to be stocked with thousands of doses of dangerous drugs, smuggled into Guyana. (AP Laserphoto)